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TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson No. 42

BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM

TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson Forty-two

THE SUN

The title, THE SUN, corresponds to the dominant symbol of Key 19, a radiant solar orb with a human countenance. It confirms the attribution of this Key to the letter Resh and conveys all the meanings attached to the solar symbol in the preceding lesson.

The sun itself is the conventional alchemical representation of the day-star, but there are details in the design which are important. They show the relation of Key 19 to other Keys in the Tarot series.

The sun has eight salient or pointed rays. Thus the lines passing through the center of the orb from these rays form the same angles as do the lines within the circles of the Fool's dress, the lines forming the spokes of the Wheel of Fortune, and the lines of the great star in Key 17. One and the same power is represented by all these symbols, hence their geometrical properties are identical.

When you studied Key 17, you were told that the secondary rays of the great yellow star would be seen again in Key 19. Here they are extended to form eight curved or wavy rays of the sun. It is as if there had been a development of power, and the nature of this development is clearly indicated because curved lines always represent feminine aspects of the Life-power. What is shown in Key 19 is the equal development of masculine (salient) and feminine (wavy) forms of the universal radiant energy.

Besides these larger rays, forty-eight beams are shown in groups of three, each group being placed between a salient and a wavy ray. These refer to the expression of the One Force in activities of integration. Their number, 48, not only reduces to 12, but is also 4 x 12. This suggests some connection with Key 12, as well as the operation of the law symbolized by that Key in the four phases of matter: fire, water, air and earth.

Again, the salient (masculine) rays of the sun refer to the solar radiance itself and to the alchemical sun, always designated by the pronoun "he". The wavy rays (feminine) refer to the lunar current of the Life-power. Throughout the alchemical literature the moon is always designated as "she".

The number 48 is the value of the Hebrew noun כּוֹכָב, "kokab", which, as a common noun, is employed to designate any star, but is more specially referred to the planet Mercury. Hence the three types of rays extending from the solar disk hint at the combination of the sun

(salient), moon (wavy), and Mercury (the forty-eight beams). This, together with the fact that the sun has a human face, makes it evident that this symbol represents the Operation of the Sun, for alchemists say: "The Great Work is performed by the Sun and Moon with the aid of Mercury."

This work is the regeneration of human personality, and its perfection gives us the Stone (אבן), described over and over again as being something which never can be made, save by the grace of God. To attain the goal, something more than personal effort is required and the something more is an influx of power from the superconscious level.

Round the disk of the sun are shown a series of short lines. Their number is not accidental. There are exactly 125, and 125, as the cube of 5 (5 x 5 x 5) represents the power of that number exercised in a threefold manner, or through the entire extent of the three-dimensional world. If we remember that 5 is the number of the pentagram, symbol of the dominion of Spirit over the elements, it will be seen that 125 conveys symbolically the idea of the extension of this dominion over and through every part of nature.

This dominion is the Stone and the Universal Medicine. In the preceding lesson you learned that the letters of אבן, "ehben", Stone, correspond to Key 0, 1 and 13, so that Key 14 sums up one aspect of the Stone. Then since the digits of 14 add to 5, the number of the Hierophant, we see that there is a link between Key 5 and the Stone.

This is really true, for the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is continuous intuitive perception which we receive through the function of interior hearing. Hence we enjoy not knowledge only, but also **conversation**. Furthermore, 14 is the value of the word זהב, "zahab", gold, referred to in Lesson 36.

There the point was made that "zahab" is the alchemical gold which is defined in the quotation from Eliphas Levi in Lesson 41, page 2. This gold is symbolized by the sun in Key 19, and in Key 14 the same gold is indicated by the solar disk gleaming on the forehead of the angel and by the gold, or orange-yellow of the background.

In Key 19, the human features of the solar orb, as in all alchemical representations of the sun, are intended to show that it is a symbol of living, conscious intelligence. Ancient occult doctrine holds that all celestial bodies are vehicles of intelligence. The deeper modern science goes into its analysis of the physical universe, the more evidence does it accumulate that this ancient notion is essentially true, though it may be true in a subtler sense than was understood by some of our ancient brethren. The sun, as a synthesis of all the active forces entering into the composition of human personality, is shown here as a **living** power, not merely as a physical energy.

It is a power like unto ourselves. We have something in common with it. It enters **intimately** into our lives. Tyndall's words in the preceding lesson, show that even on the physical plane

our lives are part of a series of transformations of solar energy. This energy constitutes a circuit. It is not merely that energy coming from the sun flows through our bodies, and takes form in our activities. It is that energy coming from the sun and **flowing back to it again** which produces all the phenomena of human experience.

Thus the solar energy shines in us, and our energy shines in the sun. There is a difference in the degree of radiance, but sun and man are lights on the same circuit of spiritual energy. This is a central doctrine of Ageless Wisdom, and it has important practical consequences.

The letters Yod shown falling from the sun (six on either side, and one in the middle, between the children) are thirteen in number. This suggests, first of all, the ideas of Unity and Love, since 13 is the value of the Hebrew nouns which designate these ideas. The letters are Yods to indicate the Law of Response, and also to show that the secret activity associated with Virgo plays its part in what is pictured here.

A further suggestion of their number 13 is related to the Tarot Key associated with the sign Scorpio. It is a combination of the forces of Scorpio and Virgo which brings about the state of regeneration wherein Unity and Love are made manifest through us.

The sunflowers are five in number. Four are open. They are symbols of four stages in the evolution of form—the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms. The unopened sunflower represents a stage of development not yet experienced by most persons. It is a symbol of the kingdom of spiritual humanity, composed of regenerated men and women. This kingdom goes as far beyond that of the natural man as that of the natural man goes beyond that of the animal.

The four sunflowers representing the kingdoms already in full manifestation are turned across the wall so that they face the children, as if the latter were their suns to which they turn for life and light. The idea suggested is that the kingdoms of nature so represented are actually turning to, and thus expressing their dependence on the regenerated humanity typified by the children.

The fifth sunflower turns toward the sun above, for it and the children symbolize the same thing. It represents a state of being as yet in its earlier stages of development, in bud, but not in full bloom. Thus at present it is more dependent on the working of universal forces than on any embodiment of those forces in human personality. The natural man and the three kingdoms below him are even now dependent on the new-born spiritual humanity, and receive their sustenance through the spiritualized and regenerated members of the human race. Spiritual humanity itself turns only to that which is above.

The wall behind the children is of stone. Thus it represents forms of truth as opposed to the forms of error typified by the bricks of the tower in Key 16. It is, nevertheless, a wall and has five courses to show that it is built of materials drawn from sense-experience. Those

materials are aspects of truth, or reality. On this point Ageless Wisdom is explicit. It does not deny the truth of sense-experience. Even though our senses do not give us a full report, the report is true so far as it goes.

The difficulty is that most persons believe there are no other aspects of truth than those we learn through physical sensation. By limiting themselves to sensation, they build an artificial barrier which halts their further progress. Thus the wall says: "Thus far, and no farther, shalt thou go." Yet we shall see that Key 19 gives intimations of another way.

The children are nude. Thus they repeat the symbolism of Key 17 where we see nature unveiling herself as truth. In Key 19 we see humanity so perfectly identified with that same truth that it has nothing whatever to conceal.

Someone may ask, "What about the secrecy with which the Masters of Wisdom are supposed to surround themselves?" The answer is that they do nothing of the kind. The veils which hide them from us are of our own weaving, even as is the Veil of Isis. Our ignorance is the veil rather than anything to which the Masters resort themselves. They are really the most childlike and transparent of human beings. Their lives are simple. Their words are simple. It is because they are so plain and direct that what they say is seldom understood. Hence an old alchemical author says:

"The Sages, then, do well to call their gold or earth, water, for they have a perfect right to term it whatever they like. So they have frequently called the Stone their gold, their superperfect gold, their regenerate gold, and by many other names besides. If any one does not perceive their meaning at the first glance, he must blame his own ignorance, not their jealousy."

A few lines back you read that Key 19 has intimations of another way than that which is barred by man's interpretations of his sense-experience. This other way is indicated by the fact that both children turn their backs on the wall. The nature of the Other Way is shown also by the fairy ring in which they dance.

These two concentric circles are symbols of the fourth dimension. The way of the spiritual man is not the way of the natural man. The spiritual man centers himself in the inner circle of manifestation. By repeated practice, he has made habitual his identification with the indwelling **Central Self**.

Hence the children are of equal stature and stand on the same level, each with one foot in the central ring. In the natural man, subconsciousness, the feminine aspect of personality, is subordinate. She is subjected to the misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the masculine, or self-conscious, mind. This is not so in the life of a spiritual man, whose subconsciousness is released from the bondage of erroneous suggestion. In spiritual humanity the powers of subconsciousness are rightly understood and rightly unfolded. Under correct

application of the law of suggestion, subconscious habits have been established which rid us of the notion that because we cannot attain to certainty by means of sensation, we cannot attain to certainty at all.

For this reason the first of the Tarot Keys is named "The Fool". The certainty of freedom possessed by a spiritual man is knowledge gained by means which go beyond sensation. Such knowledge seems folly to the uninitiated, and the world of sense-bound humanity derides it. For the Way of Certainty is the Way of Non-Sense, even as St. Paul meant when he wrote that his doctrine, to the Greeks, was naught but sheer folly.

Do not confuse this esoteric Non-Sense with ordinary "nonsense". Some well-intentioned persons do, in this age of eager, but often ill-directed quest for occult truth.

Thus it seems, sometimes, that the one sure way to get a wide popular hearing for anything purporting to be occultism is to make it as fantastically preposterous as possible. This the Inner School permits in order to test the discrimination of those who seek to approach its portals.

The little girl makes a gesture of repudiation toward the wall, thus indicating that subconsciousness has been trained to accept the Other Way. The little boy holds the palm of his hand away from the wall in a gesture of acceptance which complements what is expressed by the gesture of the girl. He is ready to receive the New Light on the Open Way.

These two represent the regenerated personality. Compare them with the kneeling figures at the feet of the Hierophant. Lay out Keys 5, 12 and 19 as shown in the Tarot tableau given in Lesson 2. Taken together in this manner, the Keys have more power to evoke thought than when studied separately.

Let us now consider Key 19 in relation to the direction South, which is attributed to the letter Resh. This is the southern face of the Cube of Space, shown in the diagram accompanying Lesson 18.

We may regard the Key as representing this face of the cube, so that the part of the design on the observer's right is the eastern half of the picture, and the part at his left is the western half. This makes the little girl correspond to the direction South-East, as does one of the sunflowers and the unopened bud.

From this we learn that it is only in humanity that the function of subconsciousness as intuition is really expressed. Subconsciousness is its agency of manifestation. In the kingdoms of nature below man, true intuition cannot be manifest. This is because intuition is conscious awareness of universal principles, and such awareness is not among the functions of the various organisms in the three kingdoms of nature below the kingdom of the natural man.

In these three kingdoms, represented by the three sunflowers behind the boy, there is an ever-increasing development of consciousness, approximating, in the higher animals, something very like self-consciousness. Animals like dogs and cats have most decided personalities, and so have birds accustomed to captivity, like canaries and parrots.

It is far from being true that these higher animals are completely identified with a group-soul and have no identity of their own. They have, in fact, personalities not much less distinct than those of human beings, including some persons who are very glib with their patter about animal group-souls, learnt by rote from Theosophical primers. Humanity also has a group-soul, just as truly as have the animals, and many men and women are by no means free from being dominated by it, as their behavior demonstrates.

The little boy, and the three sunflowers behind him, represent the direction South-West, corresponding to the sign Scorpio and Key 13. It is through the operation of the force symbolized by Key 13 that the development of successively higher states of consciousness is made possible. For this force is the active principle of generation and reproduction which provides the Life-power with the billions of physical vehicles necessary to the evolution of human personality at the level of the natural man. This same force, directed purposefully by the regenerated consciousness of man typified by the little boy, is what completes the Great Work.

The upper part of Key 19 corresponds to the upper part of the Southern face of the cube, and so we find that the Sun is a repetition of the Blazing Star of Key 17 here brought into full manifestation.

The lower part of Key 19 corresponds to the direction South-Below, and thus we learn that the fairy ring in which the children dance is another way of symbolizing what is taught by Key 18. The ring is the Ring-Pass-Not of the regenerated organism. The children clasp hands above its center. For the Other Way and the Way of Return are one, and that One Way leads within, or from the surface to the center. This we shall see plainly expressed by the last two Keys of the Tarot series, to be analyzed in the next four lessons of this course.

GRANDCHILDREN OF THE SUN

The title of this supplementary instruction states a fact. The whole animal creation, culminating in man, is the physical offspring of solar energy developed in the womb of Mother Earth. Back to its source in the solar radiance runs the current of human life through the chain of earthly embodiments. Thus truly are we "grandchildren of the sun".

There is no break, anywhere in the chain, or we should not be here. Thus we may say with certainty that our personal lives are direct expressions of the radiant power which has evolved the physical universe out of itself. In us, beginning (1) and end (9) are united. Rightly

understood, therefore, Key 19 strengthens faith, and gives that calm confidence in the perfect adequacy of the force we are learning to direct . . . a force that flows through our minds, our speech and our actions, into the field of circumstance surrounding us.

Faith works wonders even when it is blind. **Seeing** faith, resting on the sure foundation of demonstrable knowledge, accomplishes even greater marvels. It is the basis of courage and of personal power. Thus what is pictured by Key 19 is, astrologically, the ruler of the activities represented by Key 8; and in Key 4, astrologically, we have the Tarot presentation of the special field in which the solar radiance finds its highest expression in human life.

You have within you the power which constitutes creation. It is a real power, even in the narrow sense of "real" as understood by the crassest materialist. It is no dream, no fancy, no wish-fulfillment. It can be measured and weighed. It is also the substance of every physical thing you know. Through unmeasured millenniums of evolution it has worked to produce its highest terrestrial instrument, human personality. Now, in you and others working along the same lines of endeavor, it is effecting the marvel of conscious, purposive evolution from mere homo sapiens into something far beyond . . . homo spiritualis.

We say "now", but we do not mean this regeneration is something new. By comparison with the millions of millenniums of terrestrial past revealed by the radio-active properties of fossil rocks, man's history is as a moment in the great drama of the Life-power's self-expression.

Our time-sense makes the lives of the great Regenerates seem far distant from us; but in the Eternal Consciousness, Moses and Buddha, Lao-tze and Jesus are truly our contemporaries. The same power which was at work through them is at work in us, can perform the same wonders, can free us forever from the space-time limitations symbolized in Key 19 by the wall behind the children.

We think of these great men as "old souls", far advanced beyond us. But what is their report of themselves? They all agree that they are first-fruits, that they are little children of the Spiritual Sun. They are our kinsmen, and in their eternal consciousness they truly live and act through us. Their powers flow out through the channels of our human personality.

Unperceived by most of us; recognized as present by only a few in every human generation; this power really and truly is present, just as the invisible waves of innumerable broadcasting stations are present in the room where you read these words. It is the presence of these mighty powers in you which has shaped your life, and has resulted in the special interests which make you one of the great body of men and women who are called to determine the future of mankind.

Does this seem too grandiose? Why underestimate yourself? The real nature of man is essentially divine. When we begin, however dimly, to realize this and act upon the realization, we find ourselves dancing with the children in the fairy ring.

Telegraph and telephone companies have instruments which take an electric impulse, weakened by long-distance transmission, and build it up again. In the creative order, man is like that. In him the creative impulse originating in the Limitless Light, and physically concentrated in our sun, runs like a weak current because it has been transmitted through an unimaginably long series of lives. Yet in man this weak impulse can be made to rise in power and intensity. This is the inner occult meaning of "regeneration". In us the Life-power flames again with its original creative potency.

More than this, our high destiny is to bring forth upon this globe a new race of men and women. Not by the slow processes of birth and growth, nor by transmission of characteristics established during thousands upon thousands of years of ordinary generation. Those processes have reached their limit in producing homo sapiens. In a sense the Coming Race is self-generated, self-created. Its members already walk the earth and every year sees the addition of new recruits to its ranks.

Times of stress and trial like these, the records show, are times particularly favorable for the development of such men and women. The whole history of evolution shows that great changes and great advances come in periods of crisis and cataclysm. In such a period it is our privilege to find ourselves once more incarnate on this earth.

What has all this to do with practical fulfillment? First, that as you were taught in SEVEN STEPS, vision of the desirable results must precede all our endeavors to effect its actualization. So we show you the picture and remind you how often you have been told that nothing is too good to be true. Second, that by using Key 19 itself, and feeling in you the swelling surge of the Cosmic Light, you will build up the necessary mood of confident expectation. For you will know, better and better as you practice, that the Life-power can be relied upon.

Already you are among the called. Your vocation is clear. Point yourself toward it, and all the necessary transformations of personality and circumstance will have been begun. Not that you are to suppose the high vision is to be henceforth your exclusive mental preoccupation. What we aim at is to have you practice the long view a little more. Things nearer at hand will demand attention to be sure, but these are only the changing scenery along the Way of Return.

There may be dark days. There may be times of storm and stress. Yet, if you do but remind yourself of who and what you really are, power to meet the day's requirements will well up within you. Not idle daydreaming, but clear vision of your inevitable, certain destiny, will be the fruit of this practice with Key 19. It shows you, as do the other Tarot Keys, what you really are—the fulfillment and hope of all the kingdoms of nature below the level of humanity. Through you, and others like you, not only is human personality to be regenerated, but, more than this, the very earth shall blossom like the rose.

Regeneration means re-creation. Too often we confuse recreation with various means of escape from reality. Yet the Great Work, say the alchemists, is really child's play. Nothing deadly serious about it. This, perhaps, is the most important use of Key 19. Identify yourself with the little children and you will begin to feel their gay lightsomeness. You will be rid of the disguises of pretension and undue regard for what people think. You will recapture the innocent shamelessness symbolized by their nudity. For the New Creature has nothing to hide from and nothing to conceal.